

California Portable Classrooms Study

A joint project of the California Air Resources Board and Department of Health Services

California Environmental Protection Agency



Air Resources Board



Gray Davis, Governor



Department of Health Services

Dear Superintendent:

We are writing to request your support for participation of some of your district's schools in Phase II of the California Portable Classrooms Study (Phase I was conducted this past spring). The California Air Resources Board (ARB) and the California Department of Health Services (DHS) are conducting this study to learn more about the environmental health conditions in California's portable classrooms.

As you may already know, this study has been mandated by the California Legislature. It also is endorsed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Ms. Delaine Eastin (see enclosed letter). The study results will be used to make recommendations to the Legislature to remedy any unhealthful conditions found. These recommendations will help shape future programs and funding decisions at the State level.

The ARB and DHS have contracted with Research Triangle Institute (RTI) to conduct the study. Within the next week, RTI staff will be calling to request your support.

The schools in your district listed on the enclosed form have been randomly selected to participate in Phase II of this study. After obtaining your support, RTI staff will contact the principals of the selected schools to set a mutually convenient date for the study. Each participating school will receive a check for \$100 as a "Thank You" for their participation. More importantly, participating schools will have contributed important information needed to assess our portable classrooms and will help identify any state-level changes needed to improve environmental conditions in our classrooms.

Phase II of the study will be conducted by RTI and will require very little time from staff in your office or at the school. RTI will ask the facilities manager to provide current lists of portable and permanent classrooms, from which RTI staff will select the study classrooms. Two portable classrooms and one traditional classroom will be selected for study from each participating school. Two RTI staff members will visit each school for one day and conduct the following activities in each study classroom: air sampling; assessment of the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems; floor dust collection, and temperature and humidity monitoring.

To minimize the impact on classroom instruction, the sampling equipment will be set up before classes begin and removed after classes have ended. The monitoring equipment is quiet and unobtrusive. In addition, comparable air monitoring will be conducted outdoors at each school.

We will ask for assistance from the facilities manager for each school to complete a brief questionnaire regarding the school. In addition, on the day that we visit the school, we will request that the facilities manager, or someone knowledgeable about the HVAC system at the school, accompany RTI's technician during assessment activities.

We hope that you will support this study because we can produce the most definitive results only if we obtain data from all of the randomly selected schools. The information collected from the participating schools and staff will remain strictly confidential; the names of individual schools and staff members will not be reported to our agencies or any other government agencies. We ask that you approve your schools' participation in this important research and take time to talk with the RTI staff who will call you in the next week or so. If you would like to receive the results for schools in your district, you can request them from RTI.

We would appreciate a faxed letter indicating your support. A sample letter of support is enclosed. Please copy this letter onto your district's letterhead, then date and sign the letter, and fax it to RTI at (919) 541-6854. We will send a copy of this letter to the principals of the schools on the enclosed list to inform them of your approval.

If you have questions or concerns about this study, please call us at the numbers below or call the RTI Project Director, Dr. Roy Whitmore, at (800) 334-8571, Ext. 5809, between 8 am and 5 pm, Eastern time. We have enclosed a brochure describing the study. Additional information about the project can be found at our website at <http://www.arb.ca.gov/research/indoor/pcs/pcs.htm>.

Sincerely,



Peggy L. Jenkins
ARB Project Officer
(916) 445-0753



Jed Waldman
DHS Project Officer
(510) 540-2469

cc: Dr. Roy Whitmore, RTI

- Enclosures:
- (1) Letter from Delaine Eastin
 - (2) Study brochure
 - (3) Letter of approval to be copied to your letterhead, signed, and faxed to RTI
 - (4) List of schools in your district that were randomly selected for Phase II